



DEET Repellent

(N,N-diethylmetatoluamide)

What You Need to Know

Deployment Medication Information Sheets (DMIS) are provided by the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine (USACHPPM). Written for soldiers and their families, they provide basic information on deployment medications that are intended as guidance only; consult your health care provider for more information.

What is DEET repellent?

- DEET (N,N-diethylmetatoluamide) is an ingredient in many insect repellents. It is the most effective compound found in insect repellents.
 - It is effective against mosquitoes, biting flies (gnats, sand flies, deer flies, stable flies, black flies), ticks, harvest mites, and fleas.
 - Several commercial DEET formulations are available.
 - The standard military skin repellent contains 33% DEET and is a long-acting formulation that provides protection up to 12 hours.

Why should I use DEET repellent?

- Insect bites are a painful nuisance and may even be a source of disease.
- It is important to consider the use of insect repellents when traveling to environments with biting insects.

How do I use DEET repellent?

- Use a product that contains 20 to 50% DEET. DEET in higher concentrations is not more effective.
- Insect repellents containing DEET should always be used according to label directions.
- DEET should be applied lightly and evenly to exposed skin, being careful to avoid contact with eyes, lips, and broken or irritated skin. It should never be used underneath clothing.
- Wash off when exposure to mosquitoes and other insects has ended.

What does the military require?

DEET is required for use when on duty or deployed to environments with biting insects, especially if the insects are known to carry human diseases.

Are there any side effects?

Adverse reactions have rarely developed after contact with low concentrations of DEET. If you are allergic to DEET or any of the other ingredients listed on the container, see a health care provider prior to using DEET.

Is there any reason I shouldn't use the medication?

- Do not use on children under 3 years old.
- Avoid applying higher-concentration products to the skin, particularly on children. Pediatric insect repellents with 6-10% DEET are available. Use DEET sparingly on children and don't apply to their hands, which they often place in their eyes and mouths.

What if I'm pregnant?

If you are pregnant or may become pregnant, see your health care provider prior to using DEET.

You *can* avoid getting mosquito bites with DEET repellent!

- Eliminate mosquito-breeding sites by emptying water collected in outdoor containers or debris.
- Remain in well-screened areas, particularly at dawn, dusk, and early evening when mosquitoes are most active.
- Use mosquito nets.
- Wear loose clothing that covers most of the body.
- For greater protection, clothing and bed nets can be soaked in or sprayed with permethrin, which is an insect repellent licensed for use on clothing.

Where can I get more information?

- Health care provider at your military treatment facility.

DMIS Provided by:

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